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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines staff development programs offered by the teacher education faculty at Cardinal Stritch College (Wisconsin) to 26 districts from CESA 7 over 5 years. More than 850 administrators, staff, parents, board members, teachers, and students have participated. After assessing district and school needs through ongoing evaluation, surveys, focus groups, and other efforts, six programs were developed. The programs, which are described briefly, are: (1) Leadership I: School Improvement Team Training; (2) Leadership II: Advanced Facilitator Training; (3) Conflict Resolution through Collaborative Negotiation; (4) Activating Student Responsibility for Learning: Skills for the 21st Century; (5) CESA #7 Academy for Principals; and (6) Active Learning. Participants were able to earn college or CEU credit. The format for both the way the sessions were offered and the focus of the sessions changed based on the input received from participants. The last sections of the outline list what the staff has learned through the sessions and outgrowths of the program. A chart depicting professional knowledge base for teaching and learning is appended, as well as an outline of what teachers need to know and be able to do. (ND)

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Norms that Affect School Culture

REFORM: Schools Cannot Do It Alone
School Districts / CESA 7 / Cardinal Stritch
1992 - Present

Who

Faculty from Cardinal Stritch College have offered staff development in 26 districts from CESA 7 over 5 years with over 850 participants. Depending on the training. Participants included administrators, staff, parents, board members, teachers and students.

What

- Assessed district/school needs through
  - √ Planning a session with representatives from the districts in CESA 7
  - √ On-going evaluation of efforts
  - √ Phone and written surveys
  - √ Strategic planning for staff development
  - √ Continuous evaluation of the sessions
  - √ Focus groups both at the school/district site
  - √ Update and renewal sessions for past participants
- Offered staff development for:

√ Leadership I: School Improvement Team Training - 6 days

This is a six-day interactive experience for school-based teams which is designed to facilitate the development, implementation and assessment of a school improvement plan. The emphasis will be upon shifting from a top down decision-making strategy to one that emphasizes shared decision-making when the decisions affect student learning and achievement. The sessions will focus upon team development and will stress the importance of making decisions that impact upon the performance and achievement of all students. Teams needing initial training are welcome as well as schools sending a second or third team. It is very important that the principal or other key administrator participate in the training. Also, it is very desirable that parents, a board member, and students (when appropriate) are members of the team.

√ Leadership II: Advanced Facilitator Training - 3 days

Empowering school staff to facilitate the School Improvement process requires: problem solving skills, collaborative skills, meeting management, program assessment tools, and knowledge of organizational and systems development. This series builds awareness and skills in these critical facilitation areas. Participants should have taken the original Academy and possess the motivation to become premier facilitators. We recommend that participants attend in teams of two or more.

√ Conflict Resolution Through Collaborative Negotiation

School change creates conflict! Conflict creates opportunities for growth and creative problem solving. This workshop will provide initial training and practice in resolving conflicts through collaborative negotiation. We

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recommend that participants attend in teams of two or more. At the end of the program, participants will have a solid knowledge base and increased skill level to a) modify their own behavior, and b) better understand and deal with others' behaviors.

√ Activating Student Responsibility for Learning: Skills for the 21st Century - 3 days

How can we teach so that students become actively involved in their own learning? These sessions are designed for K-12 teachers who are interested in assisting their students in becoming active and involved learners. Emphasis will be placed on brain compatible learning, and a variety of teaching approaches and techniques will be modeled and discussed.

√ CESA #7 Academy for Principals: - 3 days

The principal's role is probably impacted more than any other role in education as schools undergo systemic change. This forum will provide an avenue to discuss, brainstorm, and problem-solve leadership issues. This will be an opportunity to develop and refine the conceptual, interpersonal, and technical skills that are necessary to be an effective principal. The skills emphasized will be based on the needs of the participants, but will include conceptual, interpersonal, and technical skills.

√ Active Learning - 3 days

This workshop will focus on classroom teaching strategies which actively engage students in taking more interest in and responsibility for their own learning. The content and activities will be appropriate for both elementary and secondary teachers as they move toward and engage in block scheduling, integrated curriculum approaches, etc. Emphasis will be placed on establishing a positive and brain compatible learning environment for students and teachers.

How

- Representatives from CSC, CESA 7 and school districts wrote grants offered through DPI to help finance the offerings.
- Districts contributed from staff development funds.
- College credit was offered. Participants paid for this
- CEU credit was given to those who wanted it for license renewal and were not taking it for college credit.

The format for both the way that the sessions were offered and also the focus of the sessions changed based on the input that we received from participants. Based on district needs, we increased the topics and the sections of the offerings.

Format

- We moved from offering sessions at one site to offering sessions at three sites. Offering options in locations made it much more convenient for districts.

- We moved from a more "input" driven format to a facilitative format which

gave participants significant amounts of time in each session to work together in teams. Facilitators helped teams to achieve.

We offered opportunities for individual support within each district.

Content

Our assumptions changed in the following areas:

1. The ease of transferring such skills as "problem solving" and "conflict resolution" changed. It is very difficult to transfer these skills. We encouraged districts/schools to bring one team one year and another the next. Several schools have done this.
2. The district's skill and habit of basing decisions on data. We moved to focusing on how all of these efforts help and support student performance. Our focus became developing teams that can become skilled so that they can amplify learning.

What Have We Learned?

- Importance of having a student focus
- Necessary support structures
  - √ Time
  - √ Resources
- Alignment of staff development to district priorities was critical
- Superintendent's and principal's involved was critical
- Necessary skill transfer
- Direct connection to teachers and learners
  - * All of these are necessary to build capacity in the school/district to have systemic transformation that positively impacts learning and achievement.

Questions to be addressed include: a) How do I turn conflict into an opportunity?, b) How do I avoid competitive negotiations?, and c) How do I use collaborative strategies in order to engage in creative problem-solving?

Outgrowth of this:

- Focus groups in district to determine what they have learned and what they will need.
- Green Bay is going to divide their district into quadrants, increase the School Improvement Training to 8 days. Theme Leadership and Learning . . . Transition all of the above efforts into these two themes over 3 years. It will be "kicked off" in August with a retreat for all administrators.

Resources:

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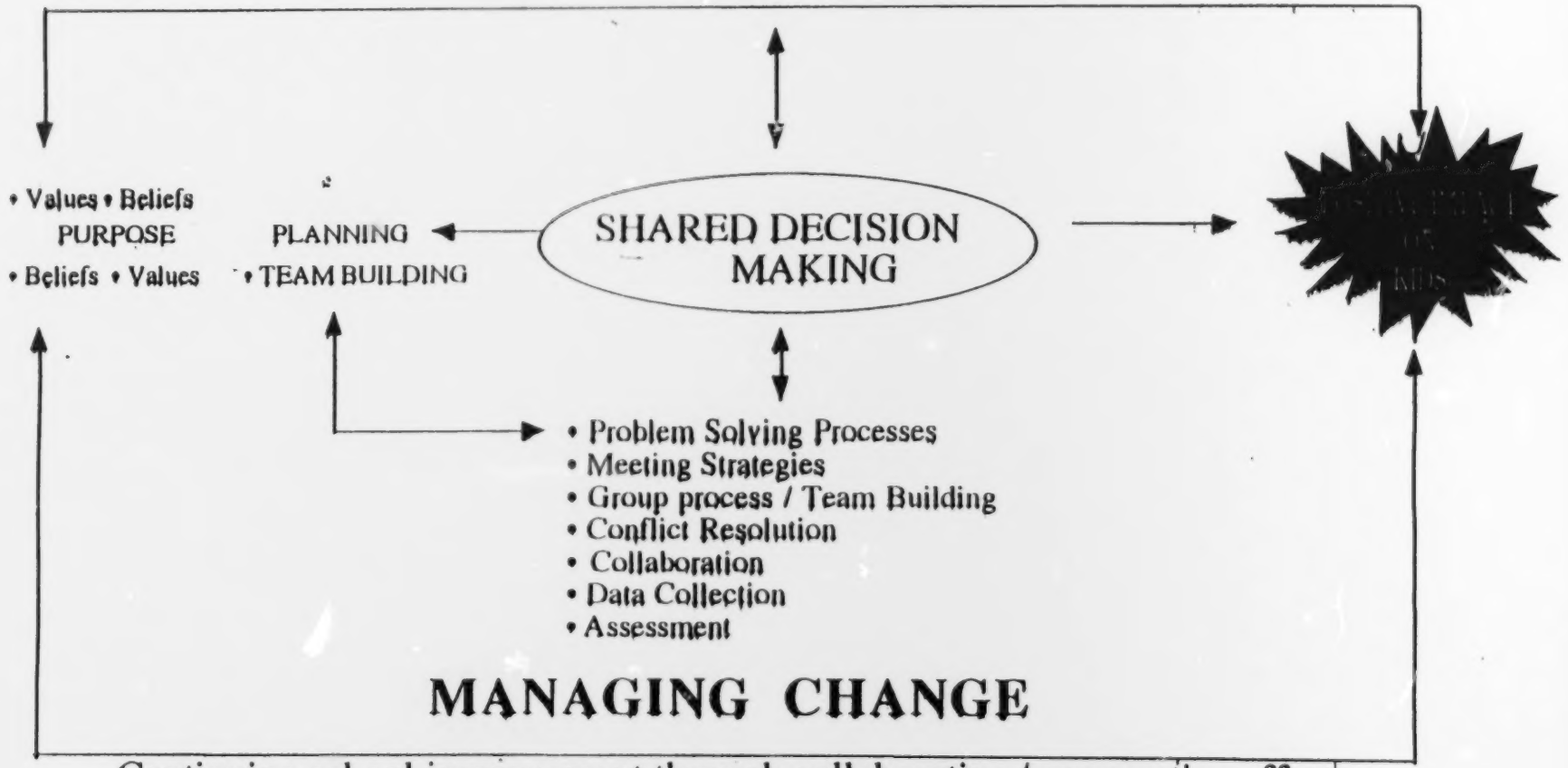
PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE BASE
FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING



Continuing school improvement through collaborative / cooperative efforts

What teachers must know
and be able to do
in the 1990's and beyond

Adapted from Michael Fullen, Teacher Leadership: A failure to conceptualize, PDK, 1994

Expertise in:

- √ Brain-based learning
- √ Teaching in a brain compatible way
- √ Collaboration
- √ Content and Context
- √ Continuous learning for themselves
- √ The change process
- √ Moral purpose
- √ Conflict resolution and problem-solving skills

Recipe for creating a learning organization

Adapted from Prisoners of Time, a report of the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, 1994

- √ Reinvent schools around learning, not time
- √ Fix the design flaw; use time in new and better ways
- √ Establish an academic day
- √ Keep schools open longer to meet the needs of children and communities
- √ Give teachers the time they need
- √ Invest in technology
- √ Develop local action plans to transform schools
- √ Share the responsibility: finger pointing and evasions must end

Evolved schools

- Changes in capacity
- Knowledge and skills
- Action inquiry
- Focus on curriculum and instructional practice
- Rich training and development
- Authentic rewards for high performance

First and Second Generation Correlates

- Safe and Orderly Environment
- Climate of High Expectation for Success
- Instructional Leadership
- Clear and Focused Mission
- Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task
- Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress
- Home-School Relations

Organizational Improvement Through Positive Corporate Culture

- Shared Purpose
- Collegiality
- Experimentation
- Appreciation and Recognition
- Involvement in Decision Making
- High Expectations for Employees
- Protecting What's Important
- Tangible Support
- Caring, Celebration and Humor
- Traditions
- Trust and Confidence
- Reaching Out to the Knowledge Base
- Honest and Open Communication

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